

Unexpected and Habit Driven: Perspectives of Working from Home during the Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

No one in the world are expecting this Covid-19 pandemic, impacting mostly on the healthy issue, economic issue, social issue and much more that human being never thought about it. In the white cellar worker, working from home now is a necessity, not just about bringing work to home but many issues raise during this working condition. One of the issues raises is about productivity. For workers that used to work remotely using technology they don't feel any issues, however, on the others hand for those just enter this new work style, it might be a problem. Telecommuting work have been getting popularity in the late 1980s, mostly this way of work is in respond to many issues in the develop country. As it may too early to conclude where telecommuting and work from home is an apple to apple comparison, as far as the research done in the past, it may can be concluded that the essence is the same. However, little research have been done in the past decade for looking at the telecommuting productivity especially the developing countries. This unexpected event (Covid-19) forces white cellar worker working from home, regardless what type of organization they work for. It may create new work habit, perhaps promote work life balance better for some, or maybe on the other hand bring new productivity issues. It is important in this occasion, that APMBA will open special issue for August 2020 issue to encourage scholars around the world to submit their paper consist of ideas regarding working from home issues. With this editorial note, I would like also to congratulate four paper that addressing marketing, entrepreneurship, operation and finance issue resulted from the 3rd AICMBS conference which was held in October 2019 that coloring the research dissemination through this scholarly venue.

Keywords

Covid-19; white cellar; telecommuting; work from home

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Background of the Issue

Responding to the growing situation and information related to the spread of Covid-19, formal organizations around the world are forced to adopted various related policies, including issuing circular letters

containing work from home (WFH) policies. Working from home or work from home certainly has the same weight and following obligations and responsibilities by working from the office. However in the implementation, the application of work from home turned out to have

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challenges and obstacles that many employees are not to use to instead of the fact that not all sectors of work can be done from home. Works regarding to telecommuting in the early 1990s (Piskurich, 1996; Kugelmass, 1995) , indicating that working remotely using telecommuting approach can affect the implementation of work from home such as the absence of work tools and communication, lack of coordination, disruption of the "domestic" environment in the household, and so forth.

Work from home is a term of working remotely, coined back in the early 1990s by, known well as telecommuting and related to this pandemic situation popular to be called as working from home. In shorts that workers do not need to come to the office and interact face to face with other workers. Back in the early 2000s, Crosbie & Moore (2004), working from home means paid work done mainly from home (at least 20 hours per week). Working from home will provide flexible time for workers to provide life balance for employees. On the other hand it also provides benefits for the company.

In term of working hours, some organizations apply normal working hours 8 am to 4 pm or in more flexible term let the employees to create their own pace in their allocated hours as long as work is done and communication is always fast response. In these today 4.5G era, where the fast connection is available, employer can demand the works results as far as they requested (Day and Tonnet, 2019). With the availability of technology interface that the employees can adopt on their own convenience, ie using laptop to manage work using google drive etc or as simple as they using their smartphone by using sophisticated apps that can speed up their work processes, their performance can be monitored by their supervisor.

With these issues, problems does occur when it reach to the wellbeing of the employees, such as working from home

may demand more family time, or perhaps with single individuals it may affect their work life balance. This issues has been studied back in the late 1990s, where Hill, et al, (1998) warned that work life balance may impacted by bringing work to home. This questions arise again and we can't deny I in this Covid-19 pandemic that like or dislike to continue the work we have to work from home

Questioned Conclusions

Research in USA by You Gov with the Huffington Post, on 1,964 adult respondents in the United States during May 18-20 2020. The survey results revealed that, as many as 26 percent of workers preferred and would continue to choose the concept of work from home, whereas more than 38 percent prefer the combination of working in the office and at home, while the rest indicates that they are not satisfied et al with WFH. The positive sign revealed from this study is that most respondents also welcomed the concept of work from home which is part of the new normal.

As it may too early to conclude where telecommuting and work from home is an apple to apple comparison, as far as the research done in the past, it may can be concluded that the essence is the same. However, little research have been done in the past decade for looking at the telecommuting productivity especially the developing countries. This unexpected event (Covid-19) forces white cellar worker working from home, regardless what type of organization they work for. It may create new work habit, perhaps promote work life balance better for some, or maybe on the other hand bring new productivity issues. From the organizational behaviorist researcher point of view, it may be some future research agenda in the next or two year time to revisit how this issues actually worth to research.

Notes on Contributor

Dodi Wirawan Irawanto is a lecturer in the Department of Management, Brawijaya University. His research interest is focused on Human Resource Management, Leadership, and Human Resource Planning. He finished his master degree in the University of Wolhongong – Australia and his doctoral in Massey University – New Zealand. One of his research publications is “The Influence of Paternalistic Leadership to the Commitment of Civil Government in Achieving a Credible and Accountable Government”

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